Indian delegation to Afghanistan

842. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are sending a high level delegation to Afghanistan to discuss ways and means to help rebuilding Afghanistan;

(b) whether India has already granted Afghanistan MFN status and has offered to put the whole weight of the Indian Industry to help in this programme;and

(c) if so, the progress made in this regard.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) to (c) The Government is in regular consultation with the leadership of the Afghan Interim Administration to discuss various areas and specific projects in which India could assist in rebuilding and reconstruction in post conflict Afghanistan. The areas of Indian assistance were also discussed during the recent visit of H.E. Hamid Karzai, Chairman of the Afghan Interim Administration to India on 26-27 February, 2002.

India and Afghanistan had signed a trade agreement on June 24, 1978. According to article 4 of this agreement, both Governments had accorded to each other MFN treatment. The Government is working closely with the Indian Industry, and would continue to do so, to address various reconstruction and rehabilitation requirements in post conflict Afghanistan.

Peace talks between LTTE and Sri Lanka in India

843. SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any request from any quarter to allow the outlawed LTTE to hold peace talks with Sri Lanka in India; and

(b) if so, from whom and the decision, if any taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.